



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

JUNE 22, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Cortney Kirk	Acting Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>	

The meeting was held via GoToWebinar and was called to order by Co-Chair, Sarah Lewis at 6:05pm and adjourned at 8:09pm.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes Approval

Following a motion by Member Arbaugh, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted (3-0-1), with Member Fennick abstaining as she was absent, to approve the minutes from May 11, 2021.

PUBLIC MEETING: 15 McGrath Highway

(continued from June 8, 2021)

Member Arbaugh recused himself.

The applicant team introduced the updated vertical fins to the jewel box design, to pull it forward from the primary façade. The team focused on materiality, verticality, and separation. They added warmth and texture to the façade of the jewel box, as well as a wood-look soffit highlight at the building entry and heavy textured material to anchor the base.

The Commission and the applicant team discussed the building materiality, the canopy design, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation improvement plans for McGrath Highway, and the landscape and public realm updates.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend to make the Planning Board aware that the final public realm improvements were not resolved due to lack of resolution with MA DOT at this time.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to recommend the preferred façade option.

RESULT:

RECOMMENDED

PUBLIC MEETING: 59 Albion Street

Member Arbaugh rejoined the meeting.

The applicant team presented the backyard cottage that will be replacing a demolished barn. The plan is to shorten the driveway, reducing the impervious paving, create a small play lawn, and add a small terrace between the existing home and the proposed cottage. The team shared their landscape plan; including planting native trees and shrubs and tucking in planters along the house and driveway. The applicant team presented façade options and their idea for a modern barn.

The Commission and applicant team discussed materiality, if the Historic Preservation Commission needed to be involved, the solid concrete wall on the back of the cottage due to the climbing wall inside, the view from the public realm, and the overall successful design of the building.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend that the design guidelines have been met.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Talun, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend the preferred façade option.

RESULT:

RECOMMENDED

PUBLIC MEETING: 599 Somerville Ave

(continued from June 8, 2021)

Acting Co-Chair Kirk recused herself.

The applicant team started by stating that their goal is to deliver a commercial building at a neighborhood scale that is lab ready. They rethought the color palette of the building façade by adding gray and brick tones, they studied where along the façade it should it break, and how to scale the corner element to make it seem like it's at a scale similar to the other buildings in the area. They also presented building base options and revisions from previous designs.

The applicant team also spoke about the landscape changes, including the extended planter along Spring Street, the layered and terraced approached at the rear of the building, and the evolved material palette and site furnishings. These updates have increased their Green Score from 0.31 to 0.35. They plan to continue to work with City Staff to refine their native species planting list.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the materiality, the design changes, the staircase in the glass corner of the building, the updated landscaping and how more space is needed abutting the neighbors, the public parklet and who will maintain it, and how successful and unique the zipper design is.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend the zipper façade design.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend designating design guideline E, regarding vents and exhaust, as a priority guideline for MR3 buildings into the building design moving forward.

Following a motion by Member Fennick, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to recommend that the design guidelines have been met.

RESULT:	RECOMMENDED
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NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.